

Mary Lou Terrien

From: Ingrid B Miller <miller.ingridb@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2016 12:06 PM
To: Mary Lou Terrien
Cc: finegood@mhpn.org
Subject: Testimony to Proposed Bill to Amend 1970 Public Act 169 Local Historic Districts Act, House Bill 5232 & Senate Bill 720

Dear Clerk Terrien,

Please accept the below letter as written testimony of my opposition for House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720.

I submit this testimony as a historic preservation and economic development professional and as a concerned community member in opposition of House Bill 5232 and Senate Bill 720. I was born and raised in East Grand Rapids and after nearly a decade of living out of state my husband and I recently chose to move back to East to start our family. There were many reasons why we chose East, but one very important factor is the architectural integrity and character of the city. This community feature was influential in authoring my passion and career choice. This place and its history were things I took pride in and cherished.

When HB 5232 and SB 720 was first introduced it was hard for me to not have an emotional reaction. Not only because of the embarrassment that it stemmed from the place I call home and take so much pride in, but because it seemed born out of spite, fear, and naivety. After taking some time to digest what could have caused such an aggressive reaction to a proposed (and defeated) historic district, I was reminded that it is human nature to fear what we do not understand.

If historic districts are misunderstood as a limitation to private property rights, then the reaction to them will be ill-fitting - as is the case here with HB 5232 and SB 720. Instead let us all endeavor to educate ourselves on their successful implementation over half a century. If we identify a collective history, demonstrated through our built environment, as a cultural resource, then preserving this resource is in the best interest of the greater good.

East Grand Rapids has been spared the threat of demolition by blight, that is certain, it is also uncommon. Many communities throughout the State have utilized historic districts as a tool of protection, pride, and celebration for decades. HB 5232 and SB 720 threaten community resources statewide and do not represent what is best for the public interest.

I could continue on about the value of historic districts to our local economies and as economic development tools; how they help elevate and support real estate value; how they play key parts in revitalization efforts, attract cultural tourism, and instill community pride and identity, but realize that time is of the essence.

Simply put, I oppose HB 5232 and SB 720 as they deny my rights as a property owner and limit what is best for the common good.

Sincerely,
Ingrid Borreson Miller
1540 Ridgewood Ave SE
E Grand Rapids, MI 49506